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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: MCNS APRIL 13: BASRAH LESSONS LEARNED, MOSUL NEXT
STEPS, NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Patricia A. Butenis for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S REL AUS UK) SUMMARY: PM Maliki chaired the 13 April Ministerial Committee on National Security, focusing on security operations in Basrah and Mosul. Discussion underscored the importance of analyzing recent operations in Basrah and elsewhere to correct deficiencies in Iraqi Army and Police planning, operations, and security prior to launch of new operations in Mosul. The National Security Advisor presented a proposal to formalize control and liaison relationships among national security organs but the Committee chose to continue discussion at a later date. END SUMMARY.

TAKING STOCK OF BASRAH

12. (S REL AUS UK) The PM opened the 13 April session of the Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS) by announcing that the next day's Crisis Action Cell would focus on upcoming security operations in Mosul and environs, and inviting Minister of Interior Bulani to take stock of operations in Basrah. Bulani characterized "Operation Charge of the Knights" against the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) as "historic," saying it had already led to improved security conditions in Basrah and encouraged moderate political elements join the constitutional process. Clearance and weapons recovery operations continued with the 12 April launch of "Operation Charge of the Knights II" with Iraqi Army (IA) and Iraqi Police (IP) units taking responsibility for different sectors. Local (i.e. tribal) volunteers who had been given temporary positions in the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) at the start of the campaign were now being vetted for permanent employment. The GoI had demonstrated firm intent to confront criminals.

LESSONS LEARNED FOR MOSUL

13. (S REL AUS UK) Turning to Mosul and Ninevah, the PM said the GoI had twenty days to reexamine plans for an operation there. The opposition would be comprised of different elements than those faced in Basrah - Al-Qaeda, Ba'ath remnants, "hit and run cells." The Ministry of Defense (MoD), Ministry of Interior (MoI), and intelligence agencies would need to pool resources and coordinate targeting. The PM continued that the Basrah operation had not gone according to expectations. For example, the GoI/ISF had expected a tough fight for militia strongholds and the port area, but in the end the militia had relinquished its strongholds and had given up the port almost without a shot. The Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) aircraft did not have the combat power to provide air support, but CF attack helicopters and utility helicopters in the transport role had been invaluable. The PM praised the

support of tribal forces, adding that he hoped this element could be brought to bear in Mosul. The head of the Counterterrorism Bureau interjected that many of the IPs in Basrah had proved disloyal, and would telephone JAM to warn them of upcoming attacks. A lengthy exchange followed with MoI Bulani, who denied that the IPs had been any less loyal than other elements of the ISF.

¶4. (S REL AUS UK) Turning again to Ninevah, the PM reiterated the importance of drawing lessons from previous operations. Forces deployed must be of proven loyalty to Iraq (a point that MoI Bulani echoed, saying that in Basrah the ISF had fought two battles - one "within our own establishments" and the other with the enemy). The IA, IP, and intelligence agencies must coordinate. Deputy PM Barham Salih suggested that the PM's presence on-site in Basra had been a valuable element of the GOI/ISF success. He called on the MCNS and ISF commanders to form a "Lessons Learned" committee to analyze the fighting in Basrah, Sadr City, and elsewhere. One aspect of this review should be to analyze ISF forces unit by unit to ascertain which could not be relied on. MNSTC-I commander LTG Dubik noted that decisions made in 2007 on the structure and composition of units had provided the ISF with the strategic flexibility rapidly to reinforce "Charge of the Knights." He added that any after-action review should look at planning already underway in MoD and MoI.

¶5. (S REL AUS UK) LTG Babakir Zebari, Armed Forces Chief of Staff, echoed the theme that the coming fight for Mosul would not be a rerun of Basrah. The ISF would face foreign fighters infiltrating from Syria. The IA forces would not be as subject to local influence as in Basrah, but this problem would still exist among IPs: local police were always local.

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On the positive side, operations to shape the battlefield in Mosul had continued even during the Basrah fighting, and liberated zones had been established on both banks of the Tigris. Citizens were tired of terrorists and eager for change, as in Baghdad.

¶6. (S REL AUS UK) MNF-I DCG LTG Cooper highlighted the importance of ensuring that reconstruction and services initiatives were integrated into Mosul planning and operations. He also welcomed that fact that plans for Mosul were to be discussed with the CG MNC-I the next day at the Crisis Action Cell and emphasized the need to co-ordinate planning with Coalition. Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari (a native of Mosul) emphasized the need to coordinate with local leaders. The PM said that Mosul differed from other cities in that, while tribal influence was strong on the outskirts, in the city proper a number of established families rather than tribes exercised influence. The PM would mobilize Mosulawi parliamentarians of every stripe to support the GoI action.

INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

¶7. (S REL AUS UK) National Security Advisor Rubaie invited the Director of INIS, Muhammad al-Abdullah Al-Shawani, to offer a threat assessment, noting that this assessment had been coordinated by Iraq's several intelligence agencies. Al-Shawani ticked off a number of threats the intelligence community was working: a possible increase in sectarian violence, tensions in the Middle Euphrates and South, continued infiltration of the ISF, possible major infrastructure attacks, possible AQI attacks on high-value (Shia) targets to goad JAM into lifting its ceasefire, and continued AQI suicide bombings. INIS expected that AQI, which was short of funds, would continue its efforts to infiltrate the ISF as well as Sons of Iraq (SoI) units, to rebuild its bases in the Baghdad belts, and to seek opportunities to build ties to Shia radicals and to Shia who sought revenge against the ISG for personal losses. The

Director called for ISF to be flexible and adaptable to confront a flexible, adaptable enemy. As an example, he noted that the IPs needed female officers able to search out female suicide bombers.

¶8. (S REL AUS UK) MoI Bulani dismissed the general and specific contentions, saying that the IPs had some female officers, and their numbers sufficed given the paucity of female suicide bombers. He disagreed with the proposition that the ISF had fallen into predictable patterns. Rubaie supported INIS, suggesting that the CF/ISF approach to establishing Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts had become too routine - each area of Sadr City, for example, had its own special character which ISF/CF must take into account. A vigorous discussion ensued of the importance of developing intelligence to permit ISF to target specific criminals in raids rather than rely on neighborhood clearance operations.

SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

¶9. (S REL AUS UK) Rubaie next presented a proposed new national security architecture, meant to be consistent with Iraqi law and those elements of Coalition Provisional Authority still in effect pending Iraqi legislation. Discussion of Rubaie's proposal bogged down in confusion and jocularly regarding his complicated multi-colored organization charts, but not before LTG Babakir had made a plea for delineation of MoD and Chief of Staff responsibilities, and an indecisive debate had ensued as to whether Special Forces should come under the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, or directly under the office of the Prime Minister. Rubaie said he would take comments on board and come back to the committee with a revised version.

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